
Hunting with the Gun and Camera



224
[134] **A**ME throughout Albania is plentiful both in the hills and in the sea and the lakes. Especially in the northern Alps, where in many places man has never set foot, there is a great quantity of big game. Bear, deer, cats of almost every species, fox, wolves, etc., have all at some time or other made their presence known. Many of the natives of these regions are expert huntsmen and have learned the habits of these beasts as well as any man ever will. They have acted as guides for many parties and the members of such groups have returned enthusiastic with ample proof of their prowess and bigger stories about "the one that got away." These men always come back for another adventurous holiday having left their wives to sight-see throughout the country and at the end it is hard to tell which one has more enjoyed his or her holiday.

136
226 All of the lakes of Albania possess a limitless amount of fish of all varieties. Lake Scutari is considered the wealthiest in this respect, especially in eels. There are some

231 A stranger who was bitten by a shooting dog could neither kill it
683 nor claim compensation for his wound. Indeed, he became a public butt for being feckless enough to let himself be bitten by so tame an animal.

231 If a stranger killed a shooting dog by mischance, he must
685 compensate the master in money—two napoleons were thought adequate in most places. Alternatively, he must give him another dog as good as the one he had killed. The hour of the crime was immaterial.

224 If a shooting dog was killed from motives of spite, a feud
628 followed as in the case of house and sheep dogs.

If a shooting dog put up a hare, only its master had the right to take the hare. It might be that the chase was long and that the hare was shot by a stranger before the dog's master caught it up. In that case the latter demanded the hare and offered the stranger a fresh cartridge in return for the one he had just expended. If the offer was refused a blood feud started, the first shot being fired by the stranger.

If two men went shooting with only one dog, they skinned the hares at the end of the day and divided them equally.

231 Pet dogs, like shooting dogs, were free of the house as well as
the farmyard and ran loose day and night. Of indeterminate pedigree, they were about the size of small Aberdeens. They were not common in northern Albania, where their only purpose was to divert their master—it was thought great fun to hang a lighted cigarette round their necks. In central Albania where the average flock was small and always had a shepherd, they were much prized as watchdogs. They never failed at either house or sheepfold to bark warningly when unwelcome visitors approached. They were so brave that at sheepfolds they could dash out and tackle a marauding wolf, invariably losing their life in the unequal combat. On account of their usefulness their value was high, as much as six or seven napoleons.

The law when they killed (a virtually impossible contingency) or were killed was the same as it was for shooting dogs.

231 A few isolated rules remain to be mentioned. Clerics such as
793 priests among Catholics or Orthodox or hoxhas and sheikhs among Mohammedans were forbidden to keep house dogs. Their houses must be open day and night to their parishioners or passing strangers and might not be closed by dogs. If they kept sheep dogs

THE LAW OF THE DOG

81

they must not bring them home, but must leave them at the more or less distant sheepfold. There was no ban on their keeping shooting and pet dogs. ^{231/} ⁷⁹³

If a house dog disappeared temporarily during the mating season so that its master could not find it at dawn to tie it up for the day, he remained responsible for its conduct. It was held that a house dog loose under such conditions during the daytime was like one that had been duly tied up but had broken loose. Happily for its master and for strangers, a dog was generally too much occupied at such seasons with its own affairs to trouble about strangers. ^{231/} ⁶⁷²

If any type of dog fell into a snare set by a neighbour near its master's house, the neighbour must pay its full value. He had no doubt obtained its master's consent before he set the snare, but that did not relieve him of his liability for ensuing casualties. ^{224/} ⁶⁷²

Damage done by dogs must be paid for in money or by the dog's death. Each case was handled with a good deal of ceremony. If a dog ate a neighbour's eggs or killed his fowls, the latter asked its master to tie it up. If he refused, the neighbour had the right to kill the dog, and its master could not exact compensation. The neighbour generally took an oath in public that the dog had developed a habit of eating his eggs or killing his fowls, and that he had asked its master to tie it up and had been told to kill it. If he killed the dog without warning, he must in most places pay its value as assessed by the local elders. But in that case its master must first take oath that it had never eaten eggs or killed fowls. If the dog was commonly considered valuable, the neighbour would probably warn its master twice before he killed it. In Çermenikë and Martanesh the law was sterner; a delinquent dog had always to be killed, but if this were done without its master's leave, a blood feud started. In such cases the culprit was generally a house dog. ^{231/} ⁶⁸⁵ [628]

In cases of sheep-worrying the culprit was invariably a sheep dog. The general verdict was that the animal must die, but there was some variation in local methods of reaching this verdict. In north Albania and in Yugoslav Kosovë the dog's master must indemnify the sheep owner for every sheep worried and must take oath that the dog acted of its own impulse and had not been specially trained to kill sheep; any proof that it had been so trained would immediately cause him to be killed by the sheep owner. He must also kill the dog or keep it chained up in perpetuity. If the

681 solemnly pledged to safety for whoever goes to spend the night in Nikaj
[49] or Shalë. If any tribesman of Shalë who goes along this road is killed
[574] by a tribesman of Nikaj, the guest of all Shalë is killed, from dawn of day
till the fall of night. If any tribesman of Nikaj who goes along this road
is killed by a tribesman of Shalë, the guest of all Nikaj is killed, from the
dawn of day till fall of night.

Between the same points the road is safe for Shosh and Mertur and is
under the protection of Nikaj and Shalë. If a tribesman of Shosh kills
a tribesman of Mertur he kills the guest of Shalë; if a tribesman of
Mertur kills a tribesman of Shosh, he kills a guest of Nikaj.

[45] Whoever resorts to violence on this road must make an oath with
twelve men taking the oath and twelve standing by.¹

[233] 2. A flock and its shepherd are not to be killed by anyone; their
safety is solemnly pledged and guaranteed. Any man who kills them
must pay 20 purses or be killed and have his life equated to theirs.

3. If the pledge of safety is broken and a tribesman of one tribe kills
during the period of pledge and guarantee and a tribesman of the other
tribe does not so kill, twenty-four men of the tribe that had a man killed
must take oath saying, 'You killed me when guaranteed'.

4. The whole road to Curraj up to the Krue i Ftofët (Cold Spring) is
under a pledge of safety.

5. Mowers and reapers with scythe and sickle are under a pledge of
safety in both summer and winter pasturages.

[313] Cutters of pine slivers and timber are under a perpetual pledge of
safety.

[204] Shooters are under a pledge of safety from St Nicholas's Day in
summer (May 9th) to St Nicholas's Day in winter (December 6th).

[312] A man irrigating during the night is under a pledge of safety.

6. A house with hearth and flour-bin and the keep of a house are not
under a pledge of safety.

[237] Sheepfolds are under a pledge of safety.

7. If anyone goes out from the keep or the house in order to go to
the sheepfold which is under a pledge of safety he must say, 'Look, man,
we're going to the animals (or the fold), which are under a pledge of
safety.'

[562] 8. As for women in Shkodër and Gjakovë:

'If any of them wants herself to run away or to behave badly for the
fun of it, good luck to her.

¹ (Note by Father Gjeçov: It was the custom in Dukagjin to make half, not
all, of the jurors take an oath. If twenty-four jurors are ordered, twelve go and
lay their hand on the Gospel and the other twelve stand listening with folded
hands. In many mountain districts unless the principal person concerned
excuses someone, it is the custom of all the jurors to go and lay their hand on
the Gospel while repeating the words of the oath.)